

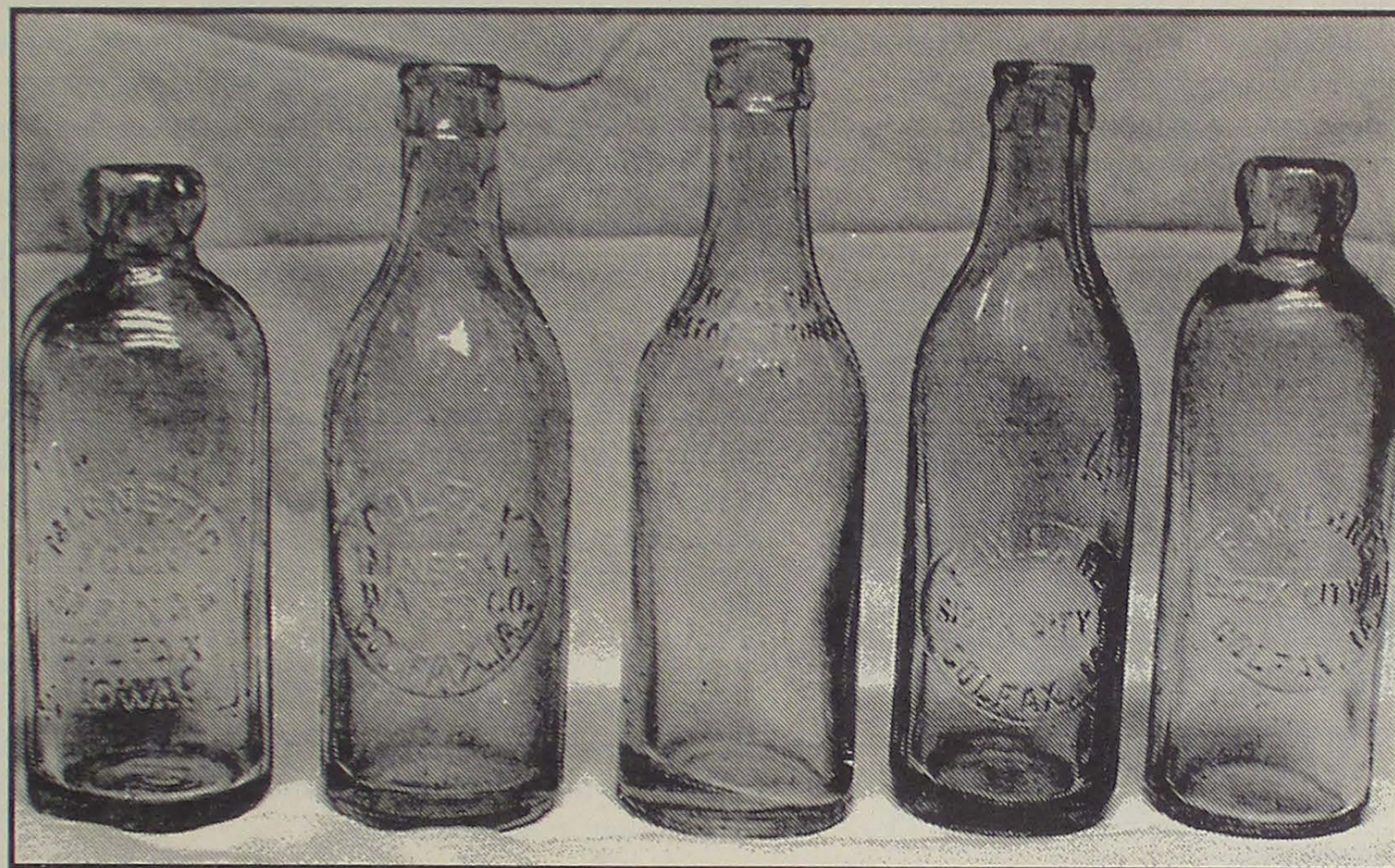
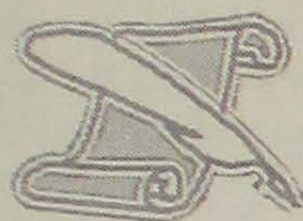


The Ames Intelligencer

Published by Ames Heritage Association, Inc.

Winter 1996

**Ames Heritage
Association Annual
Meeting,
Sunday,
March
17, 4 p.m.,
Ames Public Library**



A sampling of bottles used by manufacturers of Colfax mineral water.

COLLECTION AND PHOTO COURTESY OF DON FAAS

"The Healing Powers of Colfax Mineral Water – Then & Now"

Colfax, Iowa entrepreneur, Lee Schmitt, will give audience members a lively tour of a unique chapter in Iowa history - a chapter which may well be a prelude to the future in this Jasper County town.

Schmitt, who will speak at the Association's annual meeting on Sunday, March 17 at 4:00 p.m. in the Public Library Auditorium, is organizing a bottling company to market Colfax mineral water once again. Known at the turn of the century as the "Saratoga of the West", Colfax bottlers touted the healing powers of the mineral water that flowed at one time from as many as 18 wells. Schmitt became interested in the mineral water

while researching Colfax history for the town's 125th anniversary.

The water was discovered by railroad workers who were seeking a supply of coal for trains, and word of mouth quickly spread the news of its health-giving qualities. Schmitt will relate the history of the early bottling works and the bustling resort business the water generated. Hundreds of people flocked to Colfax between the late 1870's and early 1920's, seeking relief from ailments ranging from rheumatism to constipation. Eight hotels

offered accommodations for overnight guests, and five plants were bottling "world famous" Colfax mineral water.

Association members are invited to enjoy Schmitt's talk, which is free and open to the public. A short business meeting will follow. Refreshments will be served. ♦



**WHEN YOU ORDER
COLFAX MINERAL WATER
INSIST ON FRY'S**

the finest Ginger Ale and Soda Water beverages bottled in the Middle West. Write for prices.

D. C. FRY & CO. COLFAX, IOWA

A reproduction of an early advertisement used by D. C. Fry & Co., a bottler of mineral water in Colfax, Iowa.

Productive Behind-the-Scenes Tour

Last October 20, members of the museum planning group toured the Grout Museum in Waterloo, Iowa, and visited with director, Billie Bailey. She offered valuable practical advice and group members appreciated her willingness to share some hard-won lessons.

The following are selected notes from the trip:

- Climate control is a critical issue. Interior climate must be good for artifacts, and good for people.
- Keep exposed mechanical and climate systems out of storage areas where mechanical failure could create problems for artifacts, and intolerable conditions for workers.



Grout Museum Director, Billie Bailey (second from right), gives a tour to museum planning committee members (from left) Nick Howell, Kathy Svec, Jim Graham, Hazel Graham and Marion Hickman.

- Plan for security in storage areas.
- Avoid a flat roof, if possible.
- A firm collection policy helps you select the things that will best fulfill your mission. A committee of staff and trustees constantly reviews their collection.
- Get a good computer to keep records.
- Don't underestimate the need for storage space, and space for staff.
- If the facility is multi-floor, you need

passenger and freight elevators (with phones) on every floor. All doors and restrooms must meet ADA requirements.

- Make the exhibit space extremely flexible: high ceilings, gridwork to hang things from.



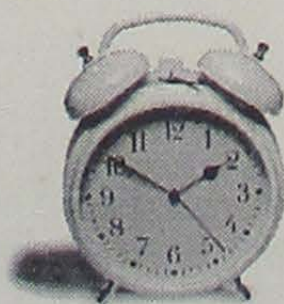
Members pass by the museum shop during their tour of the Grout Museum.

- Do not put windows in galleries unless they have UV filtering glass.
- Find the unique hook for your museum. What's the one thing that would make people come? Make it specific - so that visitors couldn't get your angle anywhere else.
- Retail sales in their museum shop are crucial to their operation.
- Funding - donors like projects more than operations, which aren't very glamorous. Their funding is: hotel/motel tax, convention & visitors bureau grants, their endowment (\$1.9 million is not enough) other grants for projects, admission fees, memberships. (Nothing from county) The Grout manages the Imaginarium and the Russell House, the result of an evolutionary process.

In addition to this trip, the committee has interviewed a number of institutions by telephone to gain insights into the planning process. ♦

Time to Renew!

Memberships in the Ames Heritage Association follow the calendar year, January to December. Note the renewal reminder notice inserted in this newsletter. Memberships purchased during the last quarter of 1995, will be good through 1996. ♦



Flag Replaced

An American flag missing after a break-in at Hoggatt School will be replaced with a 34-star version historically accurate to the 1860's time period. The new 2'x3' flag, custom manufactured in cotton fabric, will be re-installed in the school house later this spring. ♦



**THE
STORY
CENTER**

Museum/Cultural Center Planning Committee progress, November 1994-December 1995

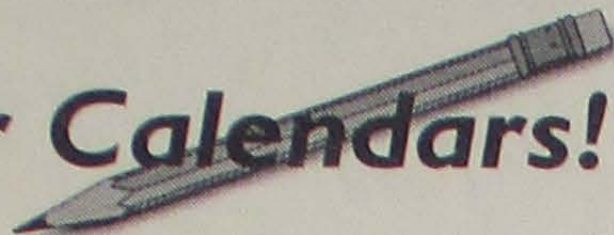
- Surveyed museums around the country to benefit from experience of others.
- Developed mission statement, name and project goals.
- Developed criteria for selecting a site and visited several suggested locations.
- Purchased archival quality storage supplies and a computer from \$7200 City of Ames allocation in 1995-96 budget. Researching cost of storage and work station furniture to complete proposed expenditures.
- Negotiated with Ames Public Library to house computer work station.
- Developed space donated by Marvin Walters for storage of collection items.
- Received funding from Ames Foundation for printing & postage and Ames Community Arts Council for a survey to arts and cultural organizations.
- Sent survey to arts and cultural organizations.
- Worked with ISU Senior Design Studio (Art & Design Department) to develop logo.
- Developed Articles of Incorporation and submitted them to the State.

Plans for 96-97:

- Analyze arts and cultural organizations survey responses
- Survey families and organizations about items that could potentially be in a historical collection to provide information for planning.
- Install exhibits in existing display cases in public places.
- Create a funding plan.
- Visit and assess suggested sites.
- Apply for an HRDP/REAP grant by June 1.
- Develop by-laws and select a Board of Directors and Advisory Panel.

Meetings of the museum/cultural center planning committee take place the first Monday of every month at 7:30pm in Room 135, City Hall. Association members are invited to attend. Upcoming meetings will be: April 1, May 6 and June 3. ♦

Mark Your Calendars!



Video Program Now in Public Library Collection

"Farwell Brown and Friends Present Some Very Special Women of Ames History", the videotape production of the Association's October 2nd program, is now available for viewing at the Ames Public Library.

Presented in conjunction with the Carrie Chapman Catt Hall dedication activities last October at ISU, the program featured Farwell Brown and six Ames women relating memorable stories about eleven remarkable people:



- Becky Jordan, presented Mary B. Welch, wife of ISU's first president
- Sharon Wirth, presented suffragette Rowena Stevens
- Shelly Boyd, presented school board president Lydia Tilden and teacher Myrtle Lanning
- Farwell Brown, presented train caller Julia Laughlin, hospital administrator Katharina Diehl and doctor Jennie Ghrist
- Cecelia Burnett, presented prairie conservationist Ada Hayden
- Jan Berans, presented ISU women's PE founder Winifred Tilden
- Kathy Svec, presented veterinarian Margaret Sloss and aviatrix Neta Snook



The program is a little over 1 hour in length, and features photographs from Farwell Brown's collection.

Thanks

The Ames Heritage Association gratefully acknowledges Ames Community Arts Council grant support for the final preparation and editing of this tape. ♦

STORY COUNTY SESQUICENTENNIAL EVENTS

TRAVELING EXHIBIT

A \$4500 grant from the Iowa Sesquicentennial Commission will fund a traveling exhibition of the history of the towns in Story County. Sponsored by the Story County Commission of the Iowa Sesquicentennial, the exhibit will "premiere" during Veishea, and will tour the county throughout 1996. Dates in Ames will be during Veishea and in mid-July.

WAGON TRAIN

Iowa's Skunk River Wagon Train will tour northern Story County, June 1 - 8, 1996. Authentic horse and mule-drawn wagons will re-create a true pioneer experience by traveling 80 miles in 7 days. Participants will travel, camp and cook in the way 1800's homesteaders traveled, and learn about changes in Iowa in the last 150 years. For registration information, call Mardelle Christian in Roland at 515-388-4623.

Get Involved in AHA Activities!

Clip & Send to
PO Box 821,
Ames, Iowa 50010
or call any
Board member.

Name _____

Address _____

Phone _____

I wish to get involved in: _____

Speak to the Future!

What would you choose to represent life in Ames in 1996? Organizers at Youth and Shelter Services are seeking suggestions for items for a new time capsule to be placed in the renovated 1915 City Hall. The time capsule placed in the building's cornerstone in 1915 was opened on January 24th, revealing artifacts that gave a glimpse of life in Ames at that time. Send your suggestions for the new capsule to Andrea Lex, YSS, PO Box 1628, Ames, Iowa 50010 by March 15. ♦

Book Still Available

Several copies of "A Ride Through Town on The Dinkey", the photographic tour of early Ames (originally published by the The Daily Tribune) are still available through the Ames Heritage Association. Call Kathy Svec at 515-232-4877 for more information. ♦

He Climbed to the Top of Sheldon-Munn On the Outside, That is

by Farwell J. Brown

"Human Fly will entertain Ames audience Tuesday". That was the caption on a Tribune front page story on July 28, 1924. Just a few years ago you will recall the story about some dare devil who climbed the Empire State building in New York City. He had failed to get any advanced permission to make the climb. That fellow used some sophisticated equipment in accomplishing his feat; also, he was in trouble with the law when he got to the top.

Billy Brine, as announced in the Tribune, did climb the Sheldon-Munn and he had everyone's permission at the time. I was in the crowd that day, and remember it well.

Fifteen years earlier, Brine had worked on farms near Marshalltown. In 1924, while visiting in Marshalltown, he took the assignment to climb the Sheldon-Munn at his brother's request.

A big crowd filled the street in front of the hotel. The climb was made on the Main Street side. Brine went right up the side of the building at a point above the hotel entrance. He engaged in a lot of "fanfare" and some theatrics. He used no equipment of any kind - but he did have an accomplice on the inside of the hotel. Climbing from window to window, Brine was able to climb to an open window on each floor as he

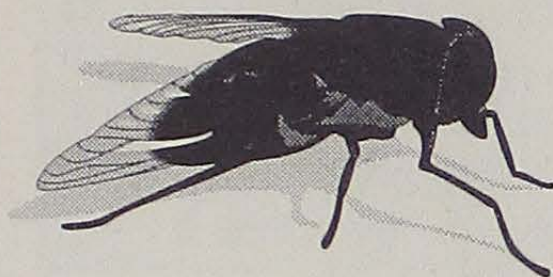
moved upward. His accomplice was kept busy opening and closing windows. By pulling both window panes of each window into the down position after Brine had reached still another window sill, he could then thrust himself upward by climbing onto the tops of the respective frames.

When you are next down on Main Street, take a look at the hotel and see just how hard it would be for an ordinary man to do what he did that day. He must have had exceptional strength in his arm and leg muscles; once he got his hand on the brick window sill above him, he would literally lift himself to a point where he could wiggle into the open window space.

Brine shook the crowd up several times by pretending to slip - each time catching himself just in time. Attaining the top

of the building, he proceeded, then, to climb the flag pole, where he balanced himself on the gilded ball at the top. As the crowd hushed, he shouted out the name of his usual sponsor, the Chevrolet Company. "Chevrolet! Chevrolet!", he called out. I presume that it was the Chevrolet Company that had sponsored his climb that day.

We don't hear of "Human Flies" today, but in 1924, the Tribune story explained that Brine was one of six in the "business" at the time. Brine had been climbing buildings for 11 years by 1924. His record had been 161 building climbs in 1921. ♦



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David Ballard, Jr.

The Ames Heritage Association is a legally incorporated, not-for-profit organization dedicated to promoting interest in state and local history through educational publications, programs and displays. The Board meets the 3rd Monday of each month, September - June. Interested persons are welcome.

The AMES INTELLIGENCER is named after an early Ames newspaper and is published three times a year for Association members. Comments/questions may be directed to the Editor.

The Ames Intelligencer
Ames Heritage Association
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Ames Iowa 50010

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